

IN THE CLAIMS

Applicant submits below a complete listing of the current claims, including marked-up claims with insertions indicated by underlining and deletions indicated by strikeouts and/or double bracketing. This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Previously presented) A method for forming contact openings in various locations of the upper surface of an integrated circuit comprising raised areas, some openings called critical openings having to be formed between two neighboring raised areas, comprising the steps of:
  - covering the entire structure with a first protection layer;
  - forming non-critical openings in the first protection layer;
  - coating the entire structure with a second protection layer having the feature of specifically resisting against an etch in the areas where it has not received any irradiation;
  - performing an oblique irradiation so that the second protection layer is not irradiated at the bottom of the regions located between two raised areas;
  - removing the non-irradiated portions of the second protection layer;
  - removing the portions of the first protection layer located under the second protection layer at the locations where this second protection layer has been removed; and
  - removing the irradiated portions of the second protection layer.
2. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the first protection layer is a silicon nitride layer.
3. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the second protection layer is a polysilicon layer.
4. (Original) The method of claim 3, wherein the irradiation is a boron implantation.
5. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the oblique irradiation is performed under an angle from 45 to 60°.
6. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the raised areas correspond to gate areas

of MOS transistors.

7. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the areas likely to be contacted are coated with a metal silicide.

8. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the step of the forming of non-critical openings in the first protection layer comprises the steps of:  
coating the structure with a planarized layer,  
removing the planarized layer at the locations of said non-critical openings,  
etching said openings in the first protection layer, and  
removing the planarized layer.

9. (Original) The method of claim 8, wherein the planarized layer is a resin layer.

10. (New) A method for forming contact openings in various locations of an upper surface of an integrated circuit comprising raised areas, wherein some openings are formed between two neighboring raised areas, comprising:

covering the structure with a first protection layer;  
forming openings in the first protection layer;  
coating the structure with a second protection layer having a feature of specifically resisting against an etch in the areas where it has not received any irradiation;  
performing an oblique irradiation so that the second protection layer is not irradiated at a bottom of the regions located between two raised areas;  
removing the non-irradiated portions of the second protection layer;  
removing the portions of the first protection layer located under the second protection layer at the locations where this second protection layer has been removed; and  
removing the irradiated portions of the second protection layer.

11. (New) The method of claim 10, wherein the first protection layer is a silicon nitride layer.

12. (New) The method of claim 10, wherein the second protection layer is a polysilicon

layer.

13. (New) The method of claim 12, wherein the irradiation is a boron implantation.
14. (New) The method of claim 10, wherein the oblique irradiation is performed under an angle from 45 to 60°.
15. (New) The method of claim 10, wherein the raised areas correspond to gate areas of MOS transistors.
16. (New) The method of claim 10, wherein the areas likely to be contacted are coated with a metal silicide.
17. (New) The method of claim 1, wherein the forming openings in the first protection layer comprises:
  - coating the structure with a planarized layer,
  - removing the planarized layer at the locations of said openings,
  - etching said openings in the first protection layer, and
  - removing the planarized layer.
18. (New) The method of claim 17, wherein the planarized layer is a resin layer.
19. (New) The method of claim 10, wherein the openings are critical openings.
20. (New) The method of claim 19, wherein forming openings in the first protection layer comprises forming non-critical openings.